

REMARKS/ ARGUMENTS

This application is a US National Phase filing, filed under 35 USC 371, of PCT Patent Application No. PCT/EP00/03517 filed 19 April 2000, claiming priority to patent application no. GB 9909358.5 filed 24 April 1999.

Claims 1-9, 11-34, 36-84 are pending in the present application.

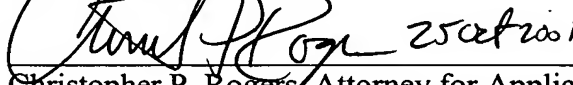
Claim 1 has been amended to comply with the handwritten amendments made in the Amended Sheets filed with the European Patent Office after the PCT International Preliminary Examination. Those handwritten amendments in the Amended Sheets that modified claim dependencies and renumbered claims are not reflected in this Preliminary Amendment, as not being compatible with US patent practice. However, Claims 5-7, 11-16, 18-19, 21, 22, 24, 25, 29, 31, 32, 34, 83 and 84 have amended herein to delete multiple dependencies and place the claims in more suitable form for US prosecution.

Claims 10 and 35 have been cancelled.

Attached hereto is a marked version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "**Version with markings to show changes made.**"

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,


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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADEIn the Specification

Amend page 2, paragraph 4;

According to one aspect of the present invention there is provided a method of forming a blister pack comprising contacting a base sheet having a blister pocket containing a product therein with a cover sheet and applying laser energy to form a hermetically sealing join between the cover sheet and the blister pocket of the base sheet.

Amend page 2, paragraph 5;

The join is, for example, a weld or solder join. A weld is herein considered a join formed by fusion of two materials, whereas a solder is considered to be a join formed between two materials and fusible alloy. A hermetically sealing join comprises a seal which is airtight.

Delete page 3, paragraph 4, line 14;

~~Preferably, the join comprises a hermetic seal. That is so say it is airtight~~

Delete page 5, paragraph 3;

~~in another aspect of the present invention, the method comprises pre-filling the or each blister pocket with a product.~~

In the Claims

Claims 10 and 35 have been cancelled.

Claims 1, 5, 6, 7, 11-16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25, 29, 31, 32, 34, 83 and 84. Have been amended as indicated below:

1. (Amended) A method of forming a blister pack comprising contacting a base

sheet having a blister pocket containing a product therein with a cover sheet and applying laser energy to form a hermetically sealing join between said cover sheet and said blister pocket of said base sheet.

5. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 4~~, wherein the laser energy derives from a laser source which is movable relative to the base and cover sheet to enable correct positioning of the join.

6. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 4~~, wherein the laser energy derives from a fixed laser source and the base and cover sheet are movable to enable correct positioning of the join.

7. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 4~~, wherein the laser energy is guidable by means of a guide mechanism to enable correct positioning of the join.

~~10. A method according to any of claims 1 to 9, wherein the join comprises a hermetic seal.~~

11. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 10~~, wherein the join has a zig-zag configuration.

12. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 10~~, wherein the join has a multi-dot configuration.

13. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 10~~, wherein the join is continuous.

14. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 13~~, wherein the laser energy is supplied by a laser source having a maximum average power of from 10W to 200W, and a maximum peak power of from 1kW to 10kW.

15. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 14~~, wherein the laser energy is applicable in continuous fashion.

16. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 14~~, wherein the laser energy is applicable in pulsed fashion.

18. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 17~~, wherein the join has a join width of from 5 μ m to 10mm, preferably from 10 μ m to 1mm, more preferably from 10 to 200 μ m, most preferably from 20 to 100 μ m.

19. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 18~~, wherein the base sheet and cover sheet comprise material selected from the group consisting of metal foil, an organic polymeric material and paper.

21. (Amended) A method according to claim 19 ~~either of claims 19 or 20~~, wherein the base sheet and/or the cover sheet comprises a laminate.

22. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 21~~, additionally comprising applying laser energy to form one or more additional joins between each blister pocket.

24. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 23~~, additionally comprising foldably interlocking the base sheet with the cover sheet to provide a plurality of join sites therebetween and applying laser energy to form plural joins at each said site.

25. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 24~~, additionally comprising applying laser energy to form score lines on the or each cover sheet and/or base sheet.

29. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 28~~, additionally comprising applying laser energy to cut the blister pack.

31. (Amended) A method according to claim 29 ~~either of claims 29 or 30~~, comprising cutting the blister pack to a specifiable size.

32. (Amended) A method according to claim 29 ~~any of claims 29 to 31~~, comprising cutting the blister pack to provide sprocket holes therein.

34. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 33~~, wherein the method is controllable by a computer.

~~35. A method according to any of claims 1 to 34 additionally comprising pre-filling the or each blister pocket with a product.~~

83. (Amended) A method according to claim 81 ~~either of claims 81 or 82~~, wherein said medicament is selected from the group consisting of albuterol, salmeterol, ipratropium bromide, fluticasone propionate and beclomethasone dipropionate and salts or solvates thereof and any mixtures thereof.

84. (Amended) Blister pack formable by the method of claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 56~~.